

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Tim Ryan (OH-17) voted today on three pieces of legislation that will help make America become more energy independent and help provide relief to Americans struggling with high gas prices.

“Despite the President’s grandstanding on drilling in ANWR, Congress passed three pieces of legislation that will have an impact at the pump,” said Ryan. “I am proud to back legislation that will crack down on speculators in the market who experts say are driving up the price of oil, force oil companies to use the land they have to produce energy and make public transit more affordable.”

Bills passed on the House floor today included:

- **The Saving Energy through Public Transportation Act of 2008.** The bill gives grants to mass transit authorities to reduce public transit fares. The bill’s \$1.7 billion in mass transit grants for the next two years could also be used to expand transit services and for the escalating operating costs of public transportation and would be available to both rural and urban areas.

- **The Energy Markets Emergency Act.** The Act directs the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to use its full authority and most potent emergency tools to curtail excessive speculation and other practices distorting the energy market. According to one expert at the Center for Energy Economics at the University of Texas, speculators could account for about \$20 to \$25 in the jump in oil prices. That's over 60% of the total rise in oil prices since January.

- **The Responsible Federal Oil and Gas Lease Act.** The "Use it or Lose it" legislation forces oil companies to produce oil and gas, or diligently develop, the 68 million acres of public land they already have leased, but are not using to produce energy. This legislation was blocked by House Republicans and was not approved.

"I'm disappointed many Republicans in Congress would rather score political points on this issue than be constructive partners to find a solution for consumers," added Ryan. "Oil companies have already leased 68 million acres they aren't using to produce energy. Big oil ought to be forced to use it or lose it. We know that when the U.S. has less than 2 percent of the world's oil reserves, but uses 24%, we simply can't drill our way to energy independence—but drilling in lands we already have set aside is a small part of the solution."

Prior to today's votes, Democrats have taken action to make America more energy independent and bring down the cost of gasoline. Democrats have previously passed legislation that has been signed into law that will suspend the filling of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve from June 30th through the end of the year, creating more supply—and potentially putting the brakes on higher prices. The House also approved the Gas Price Relief for Consumers Act of 2008. The legislation gives U.S. authorities the ability to prosecute anticompetitive conduct committed by international cartels, like OPEC, that restricts supply and drives up prices.

